

Director's report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission
presented by Jeffrey Koenings, Ph.D., WDFW Director
October 1, 2004

A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

GOAL I: HEALTHY AND DIVERSE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS DEVELOP, INTEGRATE AND DISSEMINATE SOUND FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT SCIENCE.

CMER Science Advisory Group - Eastside (SAGE): SAGE has developed an RFQ to write a work plan for assessing riparian conditions in eastern Washington. SAGE had hoped to begin field work next summer, but because of contracting delays it may be another year before we can actually begin to assess the current condition of eastern Washington's forested riparian areas. This is a first step in being able to assess the effectiveness of the Forest and Fish Rules for the eastside of the state. (Region 2)

Internet Web Presence: The Technical Applications (TAPPS) Division, within the Habitat Program, has a new Internet web presence. Information about the TAPPS Division, projects, technical assistance contacts, reports and guidelines are available at the new web pages, located on the Internet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/tapps/index.htm>. (TAPPS)

Science Presentations: Staff is preparing a presentation on "Reintroduction of Beaver for Floodplain Restoration" for the Floodplain Restoration for Environmental Benefits Workshop to be held September 21st in Bow, WA. The workshop is part of the annual floodplain managers' conference including presentations by the USGS, FEMA, public works agencies, consultants, and others on flooding and floodplain topics. One presentation of particular interest will be "Virtual Geomorphology - Flooding and Off-Channel Habitat on the Dosewallips River, WA" by Joseph Jones, USGS (Tacoma). The agenda is available at <http://www.norfma.org>. Staff also gave presentations on ecosystem ecology/management (with a fisheries focus) to the South Puget Sound Community College and NW Youth Conservation and Flyfishing Academy. (Science)

PROTECT, RESTORE, AND ENHANCE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITATS.

Crossbase Highway: The Department has concluded discussions with the Department of Transportation concerning the mitigation for Western grey squirrel habitat as a result of the construction of the cross base highway. Staff from our two agencies has been meeting over the course of the last several months. We concluded these meetings on Monday with a verbal agreement for the mitigation. Details of the mitigation agreement will be drafted in a joint letter signed by DOT Secretary Doug McDonald and WDFW Director Jeff Koenings.

In summary, the Department of Transportation will acquire the "Roy site," an approximately 358 acre parcel southeast of the cross base highway site due west of the town of Roy, and provide approximately \$3.5 million for work necessary to replicate the functions lost at the cross base highway site, i.e. plantings of oak, shrubs, and grasses. An additional \$1.0 million will be provided in the future if the performance of the restoration does not meet pre-project expectations. And finally, \$1.5 million will be provided to the Department of Fish and Wildlife for Western grey squirrel restoration on department lands. (Habitat)

Ennis Creek Fish Passage Improvements: The Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has partnered with the WDFW and a local watershed restoration group called 'Friends of Ennis Creek' to construct fish passage improvements at the Ennis Creek culvert crossing at Highway 101, mile post 250, in Port Angeles. The new fish passage improvements were funded by WSDOT and built by WDFW with help from 'Friends of Ennis Creek.' Completed in September 2004, the fishway upgrade will improve fish passage on a temporary basis pending future culvert improvements by WSDOT. The project was designed and constructed by the WDFW Business Services Division, with permits and landowner agreements negotiated by the TAPPS Division of the Habitat Program. It's a good sign that local people are willing to work on fish habitat problems, and they can be a tremendous help to us in promoting and developing projects. (TAPPS - Johnson)

Fish and Wildlife Restoration Project Funds Available from Oil Spill Penalties: Funds currently are available from two different funding sources for restoration projects that benefit fish and wildlife affected by oil spills. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the Washington State Coastal Protection Fund (CPF) both are soliciting pre-proposals for restoration projects. Restoration funds are available for projects in WDFW regions 4, 5, 6. Project pre-proposals to the NFWF are due by September 17, 2004, and to the CPF on September 30, 2004. Oil Spill team staff have forwarded information on how to apply for these funds to regional and headquarter staff and will be involved in the process to review and select projects. WDFW contact is Dan Doty (360) 902-8120. (Major Projects - Doty)

Elk Poaching Investigation: A WDFW enforcement officer responded to a reported elk poaching in the Graham area. The Reporting Party (R/P) led the enforcement officer into the area. As they approached the elk carcass, three subjects ran into the woods. The officer attempted to advise WSP that he was in foot pursuit by using his portable radio, but the portable did not get through. The officer told the R/P to return to his home and call 911 and request assistance. After 30 minutes, Pierce County Sheriff's Office and the WSP responded to the enforcement officer. A K-9 track was started. The K-9 was able to locate the three suspects who were taken into custody. Another officer also responded, securing the scene and gathered the evidence. A WDFW sergeant contacted the responding officer at the Pierce County Jail and interviewed two of the subjects. The following day, several WDFW enforcement officers followed up on the investigation. The investigation wrapped up the elk poaching and additional information was obtained on a deer that was poached the same morning, along with a second deer poached a day or two earlier. During the interview, the suspects also divulged information about a gang war "rumble" to take

place in Tacoma. This information was passed onto the gang unit of Tacoma Police Department. (Region 6)

Commercial Canadian Crab Arrest: Three Canadians were arrested by our Statewide Marine Division Officers with assistance from U.S. Customs, the Canadian Government, and the U.S. Coast Guard. The arrest was a result of other complaints from commercial Canadian crab fishermen regarding this vessel and its fishermen's illegal activities involving the use of commercial pots on ground lines. The F/V SEMI-R was illegally fishing for Dungeness crab in U.S. waters southwest of Point Roberts in Whatcom County using an unmarked crab pot ground line. A shore side Canada DFO agent observed the F/V SEMI-R landing crab gear in U.S. waters and the vessel was interdicted by two WDFW enforcement officers aboard the Gauntlett and another WDFW officer aboard a Coast Guard Safeboat. The three crewmembers were arrested on felony level charges and booked into Whatcom County Jail. A 30-35 foot commercial vessel was seized and the three suspects were booked into county jail. (Statewide Marine Division)

Geoduck Poacher Faces New Charge: Pierce County prosecutors say the man they call the kingpin of geoduck poaching also burned down the boat of someone considered a competitor three years ago. Authorities have charged Douglas Tobin, 51, and his brother, John Tobin, 52, with second-degree arson and first-degree vehicle prowling in the Sept. 4, 2001, incident. Prosecutors say men working with the Tobins told authorities the brothers burned a fishing vessel called Laurie Ann to punish its owner, Douglas McRae, for competing with them in the geoduck market.

Douglas Tobin is serving 14 years in prison for stealing \$1.1 million worth of geoduck and crab from the state and Indian tribes between 2000 and 2002. He pleaded guilty last year to theft, unlawful possession of a firearm and 35 felony and misdemeanor fishing violations for taking geoduck and crab in South Puget Sound. He pleaded not guilty to the arson and vehicle prowl charges Tuesday, but no attorney could be reached to speak for him.

John Tobin, who still faces theft, fish trafficking and conspiracy charges related to his brother's poaching ring, will be arraigned in the arson in mid-October. He has pleaded not guilty to the theft and the related charges and is scheduled for trial in December. John Tobin's attorney, Wayne Fricke, said he's suspicious of the new charges. "That suddenly they've decided to throw this at them based only on (someone's) statement seems extreme to me," Fricke said. "I have seen nothing in all the discovery in the last few years that even eludes to this being a possibility, so I'm skeptical to say the least."

According to charges filed this month, Clint Wilson and Jason Biss told authorities they were collecting geoducks in the Purdy Spit with the Tobins on Sept. 4, 2001, when the brothers saw the Laurie Ann and pulled alongside. Wilson, who says he went aboard the boat with the Tobins, said they tore off a piece of carpeting, soaked it with diesel fuel and lit it before leaving when the flames were about a foot high. The boat suffered about \$75,000 in damages, according to fire investigators. Deputy prosecutor Tom Moore said evidence about the fire didn't come out until officials were "way into the investigation on (Douglas) Tobin." "We didn't even know it was an arson for a long time," he said.

Douglas Tobin owned Toulok Seafoods processing plant in Fife, and sold geoduck and crab he took from the South Puget Sound to Canada, California and a local man who paid cash. Several people who worked with Douglas Tobin have pleaded guilty to crimes connected to the theft ring, including Biss and Wilson. (The News Tribune)

ESA Status of Herring Spawning at Cherry Point: NOAA-Fisheries has accepted a petition to list the Cherry Point stock of herring under the federal Endangered Species Act. This means that a 12-month review of the stock status will be conducted prior to making a final determination.

An important part of the federal decision was a report on the genetics of herring in Puget Sound, which was prepared by the Fish Program's genetics lab.

Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board: On September 1, the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board staff met in Wenatchee. On the agenda was a presentation by Tracy Hillman of Bioanalysts Inc. regarding the completion dates and draft products to date of the UCSRB draft Regional Recovery Plan. A 30% completion draft will go out September 30, 2004 for a 30-day formal review. The next UC Quarterly Meeting for check-in with the GSRO on policy issues related to the draft plan is scheduled for October 20, 2004. A 90% completion draft UC regional recovery plan is due to the UCSRB on December 1, 2004. The UCSRB is working on the public involvement portion of their regional recovery planning effort concurrently with the development of Bioanalysts' draft plan. The UC regional already has a draft Monitoring and Effectiveness Strategy (Feb. 2004 draft) developed as part of the UC participation in NOAA-Fisheries' Intensively Monitored Watersheds project. Bioanalysts wrote that plan as part of an earlier contract.

Landowner Incentive Program: The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is a competitive grant process to provide financial assistance to private landowners for the protection, enhancement, or restoration of habitat to benefit "species at risk" on privately owned lands. LIP has opened up a second application cycle. This year the program has \$760,000 to distribute statewide for projects that benefit species at risk on private lands. \$50,000 has been set aside for grants up to \$5,000 each for smaller enhancement and restoration projects. For major projects, qualifying property owners can typically receive up to \$50,000. Applications are due on or prior to December 31, 2004. Interested applicants can download applications and pertinent LIP information from the website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/lip> or contact the LIP program at 360-902-2478.

License Plate Backgrounds: Efforts to collect signatures required to meet the Department of Licensing requirements for proposed special license plates are ongoing and will continue through November 19, 2004. Currently, staff members are working the Puyallup Fair WDFW booth and are collecting 300-700 signatures a day as a total for all plate designs. Many of the plates had a significant number of signatures prior to the fair and we have reached or exceeded the required 2,000 signatures for two of them - the eagle and the elk. Other plates continue to gather signatures at a rate of between 30 and 120 a day. By the end of the Puyallup Fair, we anticipate that the bear plate could have 1,500 signatures and the

pheasant, deer, killer whale, waterfowl and salmon plates will be between 1,000 and 1,400 depending on the plate. The shellfish plate will still need a significant number of signatures after the fair as it will likely end up with less than 800 signatures. Other signature gathering efforts will be conducted at other venues potentially including the Yakima County Fair, Issaquah Salmon Days, and the WDFW web site.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Sampling: The Department's Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Sampling program for 2004 is using innovative techniques to encourage submission of CWD samples in areas where sample collection has been difficult in the past. Deer hunters providing a sample from deer harvested in Region 4 will be entered into a Safari Club International (SCI) raffle for a new rifle. SCI is donating the rifle and conducting the raffle. Successful hunters harvesting deer in specific, hard to sample GMUs in Region 5 will be eligible for a random drawing to receive gift certificates donated from local businesses. Other regions with lower sampling numbers are also looking at creative ways to encourage hunters to submit samples.

ENSURE WDFW ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, AND LANDS ARE CONSISTENT WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT PROTECT AND RECOVER FISH, WILDLIFE, AND THEIR HABITATS.

Puget Sound Shared Strategy Water Quantity Sub-Committee: Providing for stream flow protection and restoration is an important element of salmon habitat recovery that is not being universally well addressed by planning groups, especially in central Puget Sound basins. In response, Shared Strategy has formed a water quantity sub-committee to address this issue and make recommendations for stream flow protection and restoration actions and tools to be included in recovery planning.

Drought Status: With early (and welcome) rains in mid August and early September, both drought and wildfire concerns are now past us. The Interagency/Governor's Office drought committee held its last meeting in mid-August; further meetings are not scheduled. Thanks are due WDFW programs and regional staff for their participation on the agency's internal drought coordination team formed last spring. Our ability to provide succinct and up-to-date fish and wildlife resources information, needs, and recommendations to the Governor's Office was a direct result of that group's efforts.

Central Puget Sound Low Flows Survey: The availability of basic low stream flow information for fish in central Puget Sound basins is scattered and inconsistent. Using \$20,000 of 2001 drought mitigation funds, Intergovernmental and Habitat contracted a survey of low flows in central Puget Sound WRIs early last year. That survey relies on bringing together existing published and gray literature supplemented by interviews with fisheries and stream flow professionals (including several WDFW staff) in each basin to provide an assessment of where and when man caused low flow problems for fish occur, what the likely causes are, and what next steps might be taken to begin to develop solutions. The report has become known as the Somers-Lombard report. A draft is currently out with the final report expected in early October. It is timely and receiving considerable interest, from groups and individuals such as the Central Puget Sound Water Forum, Puget Sound Shared Strategy, proponents of the Central Puget Sound Water Initiative, basin planning groups, and others.

INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS OF OTHERS THAT AFFECT FISH, WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITATS.

Fish Recovery Planning: The Lower Columbia River Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) has released their public review draft of their Lower Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Recovery and Subbasin Plan. Over the past several years, WDFW staff from all programs has played an integral role in development of the draft plan. The draft plan: establishes recovery goals for populations and ESUs, based on the NOAA Fisheries Technical Recovery Team criteria; provides a comprehensive compilation of information on population status and factors for decline, using EDT and other modeling tools; integrates all limiting factors, including harvest, habitat, hatcheries and hydropower; and identifies goals, objectives, and strategies for addressing limiting factors across all H's. Regional staff will be working closely with the LCFRB to finalize the plan prior to December 2004. (Region 5)

5th Round SRFB Grant Application Reviews: TAPPS Division staff provided technical assistance to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) in reviewing, scoring and commenting on 55 grant applications for the 5th Round Salmon Recovery Grants. The TAPPS Division has provided this sort of technical assistance and other assistance to the SRFB for the past 5 years. The SRFB requires grant recipients conducting fish passage and screening inventories to use protocols outlined in the Fish Passage Barrier and Surface Water Diversion Screening Assessment and Prioritization Manual, written by the TAPPS Division. TAPPS/ ERTA staff provides training and further technical assistance to grant recipients in conducting fish passage and screening inventories, habitat assessments, and project prioritization. (TAPPS)

Lower Yakima River Access Areas: WDFW staff, City of Richland Parks and Recreation, Tapteal Greenway Association, Barker Ranch, and others worked in a collective effort to establish two new Yakima River boat and recreation access points. The proposal to accept the access sites on the Yakima River at Hyde and Snively Roads into the WDFW Water Access Program was approved by the Richland City Council. It is a 10-year agreement for the WDFW to operate and maintain the two sites. The sites, to be operational within the next month, add important recreational opportunities on the Yakima River because there are very few access areas in that reach. (Region 3)

Wiley Slough Restoration: The Wiley Slough Restoration Design team met with legislators and others from waterfowl hunting groups to present the initial conceptual plan for the Wiley Slough Restoration. A presentation was given by WDFW and Skagit System Cooperative staff regarding the history of the Wiley Slough Wildlife Area and the initial ideas for a design to restore the estuary in the vicinity. Members of Washington Waterfowlers took advantage of the opportunity to express their opposition to the plan with a loud and passionate presentation. The meeting was successful, with most of the legislators seeming positive about the project. The Waterfowlers have since been invited to attend design group meetings in order for them to have a chance to express their concerns and aid in the design. (Region 4)

Water Right Review: Staff continued to review water right transfer requests as a member of the Yakima River Basin Water Right Transfer Work Group relating to drought conditions. There have been continued requests for temporary water right transfers resulting from drought conditions, especially with junior

irrigation districts, that will be prorated this year and are seeking to lease senior water. Junior districts filed a petition with the court that all post-1905 water rights be prorated to ensure water for irrigation districts. Some of the transfers may affect Total Water Supply Available that will indirectly affect available water for fish or result in loss of water to some bypass reaches, including some small tributaries. Staff recommended to Ecology that a request to transfer a groundwater right to the City of Union Gap be denied because the well has not been in use for over five years (i.e., water right presumed relinquished). Flows are limiting to salmonid production in the Wide Hollow/Ahtanum Creek watersheds and although this groundwater right won't have significant impacts to flow, we are concerned regarding the continued validation of water rights that meet relinquishment requirements and the cumulative effect of this practice on surface flows. (Science)

Joint Venture With Oregon State Police: WDFW enforcement officers teamed up with the Oregon State Police (OSP) at their request to address closed season commercial crab fishing issues offshore of the Oregon Coast. The patrol netted 142 crab pots with three or four fisherman responsible for the majority of the gear being illegally present in the water. OSP told us that due to the advertised threat and presence of WDFW's Patrol Vessel Corliss offshore Oregon, the closed season fishing was minimal compared to years past. The patrol did have one setback; the Corliss lost an engine as it was returning to Westport. (Statewide Marine Division)

Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen: WDFW's staff facilitated the second meeting of the Marine Life workgroup developing studies as part of the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen (DO) Program or HCDOP. The Marine Life group has discussed information available from a variety of sources and potential studies that might be conducted. They simplified the description of the task being asked of them as: Assess the impact of low DO on the resources of Hood Canal and the impact of the resources on the low DO (a simple statement of the problem but a difficult task to perform). Ultimately, the goal of the entire HCDOP is restoration of adequate conditions in the Canal to support the resources there historically. The facilitators for all of the sections of the HCDOP will meet next and the Marine Life workgroup is expected to meet once more before final budgets from all facilitators are submitted.

MINIMIZE ADVERSE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN HUMANS AND WILDLIFE.

Clam Overharvest: During a routine ingress survey used to track intertidal bivalve sport fishing activity levels at the agency's Quilcene Bay Tidelands, four adults and one small child were observed taking large buckets of clams to the parking lot. On closer inspection, the group of five had collected 4,009 Manila clams (the daily limit is 40 clams per person) weighing 90 pounds, and many of the clams were undersized. Not a single person in the group had a Shellfish License. Although the site is well signed, the group claimed they were unaware of shellfish regulations or license requirements. Under normal circumstances, harvesters are directed to replace their over-limit clams on the beach, and instructed how to do so to ensure survival. Given the huge number of clams, the creel surveyor took it upon herself to replant the clams with the help of some volunteers, which required more than two hours. The license plate of the vehicle and other descriptions were recorded for Enforcement. This is the worst case of

clam poaching by sport harvesters our staff has ever observed during many years of creel and ingress surveys.

GOAL II: SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED OPPORTUNITIES

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES COMPATIBLE WITH MAINTAINING HEALTHY FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND HABITATS.

Lake Wenatchee Sockeye Fishery: Through Sunday, August 8, anglers have harvested an estimated total of 3,780 sockeye and have caught and released 277 bulltrout (ESA "threatened"). At a 7% estimated hooking mortality, 19 bulltrout have been killed from this relatively healthy population. We are aware of two spring Chinook (ESA "endangered") being caught and released, with one mortality. An estimated 600 sockeye were harvested last weekend with a 1.4 fish per angler average success rate. The fishery will continue at least through Sunday, August 22 based on the cumulative harvest to-date (well below maximum allowable harvest) and continued enthusiastic participation by the angling public. A decision to continue through the end of August will be made on Monday, August 23 after the latest harvest/effort update. The fishery will not be extended into September. Spawning in the Lower Wenatchee River and White River begins in mid-September and peak spawning activity typically occurs about September 25.

Annual Shellfish Co-Management Meeting: State (IRM, Fish and Enforcement) and tribal representatives met on September 28 and 29 to discuss a number of specific Puget Sound shellfish management issues, with focus on catch accounting and enforcement. Topics included recreational crab catch estimation, unaccounted mortalities for shrimp and crab, definition of allocation accounting areas and geoduck accounting. A summary of meeting results will be available in October.

Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting: The Council met in San Diego the week of September 13 to address issues associated with coastal pelagic species (CPS), highly migratory species (HMS), groundfish species, and essential fish habitat (EFH). Relative to CPS, the Council's current sardine allocation policy between California and the states of Oregon and Washington expires after 2005 and the process to address that issue is underway beginning with initial option development by the Council's CPS industry advisory group.

Relative to HMS, the Council heard reports that indicated albacore tuna are being fished at or near the maximum allowable levels. Bag limits for recreational fisheries are being considered as well as possible limitations on commercial fisheries. This year albacore catches off the coast of Washington are at very high levels generating important economic benefits to coastal communities.

Canary and darkblotched rockfish catches were nearing their annual catch targets resulting in curtailments of commercial fishing for the balance of this year shoreward of 250 fathoms (1500 feet). Intergovernmental Resource management staff worked with industry members of the

Catcher/Processor fleet and developed a mechanism that allowed their fishery to continue under bycatch caps accompanied by full observer coverage.

The Council is in the process of developing an EFH EIS for their Groundfish Management Plan. The DEIS contains alternatives for what constitutes EFH, areas that would be designated as habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC), and measures to minimize adverse impacts on EFH by fishing gear. The Council will select their preferred alternatives for these categories at their November 2004 meeting.

Turnbull NWR Meeting: Wildlife Program staff met with Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge staff to discuss the possibility of waterfowl hunting and a limited-entry elk hunt on the refuge to address elk damage to aspen groves. It appears that a special permit elk hunt is very likely and may open as early as the 2006 hunting season. The elk hunt would be a "quality" elk hunt using a variety of permits for both bull and antlerless animals. Initially, waterfowl hunt prospects seemed a little less probable, but after further internal discussions, Turnbull staff decided to add a youth waterfowl hunt to the preferred alternative in the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP). The emphasis with this hunt would be education, perhaps linking a waterfowl identification/natural history class for youths that want to apply for an opportunity to hunt on the refuge. The youth hunt is proposed as a pilot to be reviewed after a 3-year period to evaluate value and impact. The preferred alternative retains the proposal to open the refuge to waterfowl hunting in the future once more waterfowl habitat has been restored in the vicinity. The details for the all hunts will be worked out in a step-down hunt plan with WDFW input. The process for CCPs still requires public meetings and comment periods.

WORK WITH TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES ARE ACHIEVED.

Fall Salmon Season, Middle of the Yakima River: The Region 3 regional director, working with Fish Program and the Attorney General's Office staff has tentatively reached agreement with the Yakama Nation (YN) that will allow the fall salmon (Chinook, Coho) season in the middle Yakima River (Granger Bridge to Sunnyside Dam) to proceed next week (September 1 to October 22). This is a new fishery adopted by permanent rule by the Fish and Wildlife Commission last February at the conclusion of the 2003-04 "major rule cycle".

IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF WASHINGTON BY PROVIDING DIVERSE, HIGH QUALITY RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Puget Sound Shellfish Enhancement: Intertidal shellfish enhancement staff planted 400,000 Manila clam "seed" at Freeland County Park on Whidbey Island. A 25% survival to legal size is expected, providing roughly 2,500 sport limits in two to three years. Agreements were also made to provide the Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) with Olympia oyster broodstock to augment natural populations in Hood Canal. The Olympia oyster broodstock will come from the agency's Triton Cove Tidelands, and Taylor United Seafoods will produce the seed, which will be placed on private and tribal tidelands by volunteers and PSRF employees.

Razor Clam Project: Stock assessment work along the Washington coast is nearing completion. High surf conditions prevent Coastal Shellfish staff from completely finishing the Twin Harbors fieldwork, the last of five management beaches scheduled to be assessed. This work has been re-scheduled for the mid-September tide series.

The field portion of the on-going study designed to determine the rate of natural mortality in razor clams moved to the Twin Harbors razor clam reserve this week. Coastal Shellfish staff conducted extensive stock assessment throughout this area (1/4 mile of beach). That was followed by two days of digging (using licensed commercial harvesters) in 50% of this area. Excellent cooperation between WDFW and the commercial industry resulted in the successful removal of a known number of clams. The clams harvested were counted, measured and dyed by WDFW on site during the harvest and then sold by each harvester to the commercial fish buyer, also present on site. (The clams were dyed per Washington Department of Health protocol to assure these clams could only be sold for crab bait). Similar work was conducted at the Copalis and Long Beach razor clam reserves earlier in the summer. Follow-up stock assessments within each razor clam reserve will be conducted in the weeks and months ahead.

On August 27, Phil Anderson (IRM) and Dan Ayres (Coastal Shellfish) held successful negotiations with the Quinault Indian Nation and as a result the 2004-05 Razor Clam Fishery Management Plans for Copalis/Mocrocks and Kalaloch were signed.

WDFW's annual series of five public meetings held to discuss the results of the coast-wide assessment and strategies for season setting will take place the third full week of September.

GOAL III: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.

The Famous Rainier Beer Drinking Bear: Sergeant Heinck spent the week of August 23rd answering worldwide media requests for information and interviews concerning the now famous "Rainier Beer Drinking Bear". The bear caught our attention by raiding an ice chest in a campground where he discovered and drank 36 cans of Rainier Beer. The bear ended up losing consciousness (passing out) in the Baker Lake Resort. After receiving the complaint call from a park ranger, Sergeant Heinck and Officer Bauman responded. After photographing the scene, they trapped and relocated the bear using donuts, honey, marshmallows, and 2 cans of Rainier Beer for bait. Sergeant Heinck and Officer Bauman did on-camera interviews for KING and KIRO television stations. They then took the reporters and camera crews to the Baker Lake Resort for more interviews and photographs. Sergeant Heinck did a live interview for BBC Radio in the United Kingdom, which was broadcast from London, England. He also did a live interview for KMPS radio based in Seattle. Sergeant Heinck participated in a live radio panel discussion aired from Utah by Friends of the Animals. This is a national broadcast with affiliates in Los Angeles and Chicago. He gave advice on how to secure food and beverages in bear country and what to do during an encounter or attack by a cougar or bear. Sergeant Heinck also returned calls, which

included interviews to FOX Network News in New York, Metro Network News, KCPQ News, Reuters News Service, The Skagit Herald, and the Fort Worth Texas Newspaper. The bear story ran on the Associated Press. Sergeant Heinck and the bear were a topic on the Paul Harvey Radio Show. The story was aired on the Today Show broadcast from the Olympics in Athens, Greece. Websites such as Noncom, KING 5.com. and MSN.com featured the beer drinking bear story. (Region 4)

Vehicle Use Permit (VUP) Hanging Placards Completed: WDFW Licensing has completed our new Vehicle Use Permit Placard for public sales this fall. We have been working on this for a couple of years to solve the problem of moving VUP's between vehicles. The placard will be hung from the rear view mirror, allowing the user to affix the Vehicle Use Permit Sticker to it each year. The new placard is designed under the "Go Play Outside" theme "Take a Friend Along and Share the Outdoors". The cost of each placard is \$1.50, of which .90 cents will go back into the Vehicle Use Permit account for upkeep and maintenance of our access sites statewide.

Governor-Elect Transition Document: In preparation for the change in Governors, state agencies were requested to submit key information for the benefit of the incoming Governor. The draft document was submitted to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) on Friday, September 17. OFM Budget and Policy staff will review the document and possibly offer suggestions. The information included in WDFW's transition document is high level financial and staffing information, our activities as contained in the Office of Financial Management's Activity Inventory and the Department's five top issues. For those of you interested in reading the Transition Document, it is now available on the Intranet.

RECRUIT, DEVELOP AND RETAIN A DIVERSE WORKFORCE WITH HIGH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS.

Adjunct Sales Items Available Online: Many of the miscellaneous items sold over the counter throughout the Department are now available over the Internet. Russell Link's Landscaping for Wildlife and Living with Wildlife, the 2003 Status and Trend Report, Vehicle Use Permit Mirror Hangers, Collector Duck Stamps, and the Sport Fish of Washington CD all can be purchased from the comfort of home, saving our customers time and money. Inventory and revenue will be tracked with the same technology used by the WILD system. Proceeds from sales will go back to the program sponsoring or producing the items that sold. The Internal Licensing Committee, working under the auspices of the Executive Management Team, will review new products for inclusion on the Internet. The proposal form includes a cost/benefit analysis of the item, and a review of how the item supports our mission and overall goals.

DEVELOP INFORMATION SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE AND COORDINATE DATA SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND INFORMATION.

Agency Computer Architecture Study: A project to update the agency IT strategic plan, known as the Dye Report, has been completed. This update concentrated on the basic computer systems such as server hardware, operating systems, corporate databases, and office support services. Sierra Systems consultants worked with agency staff on the project, which was coordinated with the budget cycle for next biennium. Results include recommendations to simplify the current diversity of server hardware

and database choices. A budget request package was submitted to implement the highest priority recommendations. Complete project results are available from the Information Technology Services Division.

RECONNECT WITH THOSE INTERESTED IN WASHINGTON'S FISH AND WILDLIFE.

Jessica King, Chief for a Day: Jessica King passed away after a long struggle with a terminal illness. Jessica was the first child sponsored by the Enforcement Program as "Chief for a Day" in the Wenatchee Valley. Region 2 Fish and Wildlife Officers attended the memorial service in August for Jessica. (Region 1)

Shellfish Web Site Updates: Updates were made to the agency's eleven crab web pages (one for each crab region) following the sport crab closure in most of Puget Sound. New "frequently-asked questions" were also added to the agency web page on clams and oysters; the new sections answer frequently asked questions about tribal clam harvest and shellfish enhancement. The sea cucumber page was updated with the latest landings information and new emergency regulations that closed most of the sea cucumber areas for the summer season. Lastly, changes were made to the commercial crab web page to inactivate the page until the next season begins.

Second Watchable Wildlife Conference: October 12 and 13 are the dates of the second Watchable Wildlife Conference for Washington. This year's conference will be held in Soap Lake, Washington at the Pas Brisas Art and Conference Center. The objectives of the conference are to: begin discussions regarding the development of a Wildlife Viewing Coalition; discuss the next steps regarding the newly-created Strategic Plan for Wildlife Viewing in Washington; conduct training on "How to Do Nature Tourism"; and panel discussions among wildlife festival planners on successes and horror stories in festival management. The WDFW and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development are hosting the conference.

Quarterly Bulk E-mail Updates to Licensing E-list: In mid-August, the Licensing Division piloted a mass e-mail to all license customers who had provided an e-mail address. The bulk e-mail covered recent changes to license requirements (Catch Record Card changes, Dungeness Crab endorsement fees), new initiatives (e.g., specialized license plates), and included an announcement of the initial Drawing for Lifetime Privileges winners. The update was very well received. Over 30,000 customers received the e-mail; of those, only 1.3% requested to be unsubscribed. Over 2% (approx. 640) recipients wrote to thank us for the information. Many of these requested that we send monthly updates, rather than quarterly.

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF WDFW'S OPERATONAL AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES.

Sale of Spokane Regional Office: Staff has set October 27th as the date for bid openings on the Region One office in Spokane. Sealed bids must be received by WDFW Real Estate Services, located at 600 Capitol Way, Olympia, WA 98501, by 5 pm October 25. The minimum bid for the property is \$550,000. Terms of the sale provide for continued WDFW occupancy through June 30, 2005 with the option to lease the site until December 31, 2005 if necessary.